Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 00943 210705Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 PM-04 SP-02 INR-07 /039 W
---------- 210711Z 123989 /11
R 201145Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 705

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 0943

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FOR NEA/INS/KUX FROM SCHNEIDER

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT IN
SUBJ: CONTACT WITH OPPOSITION DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

1. IT SEEMS EVIDENT TO US THAT THE GOI AND MRS GANDHI PARTICULARLY WILL BE WATCHING EMBASSY AND CONGEN CONTACTS WITH OPPOSITION POLITICIANS DURING THE ELCTION CAMPAIGN. HER SUSPICIONS WE KNOW ARE NEVER FAR BELOW THE SURFACE AND IF SHE FELT THREATENED BY REPORTS OF OPPOSITION GAINS OR A WEAKENING OF CONGRESS SUPPORT AS THE CAMPAIGN DEVELOPS, SHE MIGHT WELL RAISE THE OLD BOGEYOF "FOREIGN INTERFERENCE" IN INDIAN POLITICAL AFFAIRS. AT THE SAME TIME, IT SEEMS TO US THAT WE HAVE A CLEAR INTEREST IN BEING ABLE TO MAKE A VALID ASSESSMENT OF THE FAIRNESS OF THE INDIAN ELECTION IN TERMS OF BROAD ISSUES OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AND IN DEMONSTRATING THAT THE US MISSION IN INDIA IS ABLE TO EXERCISE NORMAL AND GENERALLY ACCEPTED REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES EXPECTED BY ANY GOVERNMENT OF ITS REPRESENTATIVES ABROAD.

2. IT IS CONCEIVABLE, OF COURSE, THAT MRS GANDHI

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MIGHT RESORT TO ACCUSATIONS OF "FOREIGN INTERFERENCE" AND SUPPORT FOR THE OPPOSITION IF SHE FELT HER POLITICAL NEEDS WERE SERVED BY THIS CHARGE EVEN IF WE ALL SHUT OURSELVES UP IN THE EMBASSY FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS AND SAW NO ONE. OUR INCLINATION, HOWEVER, IS TO PURSUE A MIDDLE COURSE: SEEING OPPOSITION POLITICIANS OCCASIONALLY BUT NOT ROUTINELY HERE IN

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DELHI AND IN THE THREE CONSULAR CITIES, BUT NOT ENDEAVORING TO KEEP IN REGULAR CONTACT. THIS MAY LIMIT OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE THE DEPARTMENT WITH "PREDICTIVE" AND ANTICIPATORY REPORTING ON CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO TELL YOU IN ADVANCE OF OPPOSITION DECISIONS ON A POSSIBLE ELECTION BOYCOTT. BUT IT IS REALLY LESS NECESSARY FOR US TO HAVE THAT KIND OF DETAILED ADVANCE INFORMATION THAN TO HAVE A BROAD AWARENESS OF THE TRENDS AND GENERAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE ELECTION IS TAKING PLACE. THAT WE CAN GET FROM ONLY OCCASIONAL CONTACTS WITH THE OPPOSITION AND RELIANCE MORE ON WHAT OTHER DIPLOMATS, NEWSMEN, AND OUR OTHER POLITICAL CONTACTS TELL US. AND WE INTEND TO INTENSIFY OUR COVERAGE FROM THESE SOURCES.

3. I WOULD PROPOSE HOWEVER, TO TELL JAGAT MEHTA THAT WE WILL OCCASIONALLY BE SEEING OPPOSITION POLITICANS IN THE COURSE OF OUR NORMAL REPORTING FUNCTIONS AND TRUST THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE MISINTERPRETED BY GOI. I WOULD REITERATE OUR ASSURANCES THAT WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF INTERFERING IN ANYWAY WHATSOEVER IN INDIAN POLITICAL PROCESSES.

4. WE ARE AT PRESENT REVIEWING WHAT KIND OF TRAVELLING, IF ANY, AND STATE COVERAGE WE ATTEMPT OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN THE COMING MONTHS. WE WILL HAVE THE SAME CONSIDERATIONS IN MIND IN REACHING A CONCLUSION ON THIS THAT I NOTED IN PARA ONE ABOVE. WE WILL LET

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YOU KNOW, PROBABLY NEXT WEEK, WHAT OUR PLANS WILL BE.

5. I WOULD APPRECIATE ANY COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE ON THE ABOVE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Concepts: ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, POLITICAL LEADERS, OPPOSITION PARTIES, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 20-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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SAS ID: 3548131
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONTACT WITH OPPOSITION DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN
TAGS: PINT, IN, US, (GANDHI, INDIRA)
To: STATE
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